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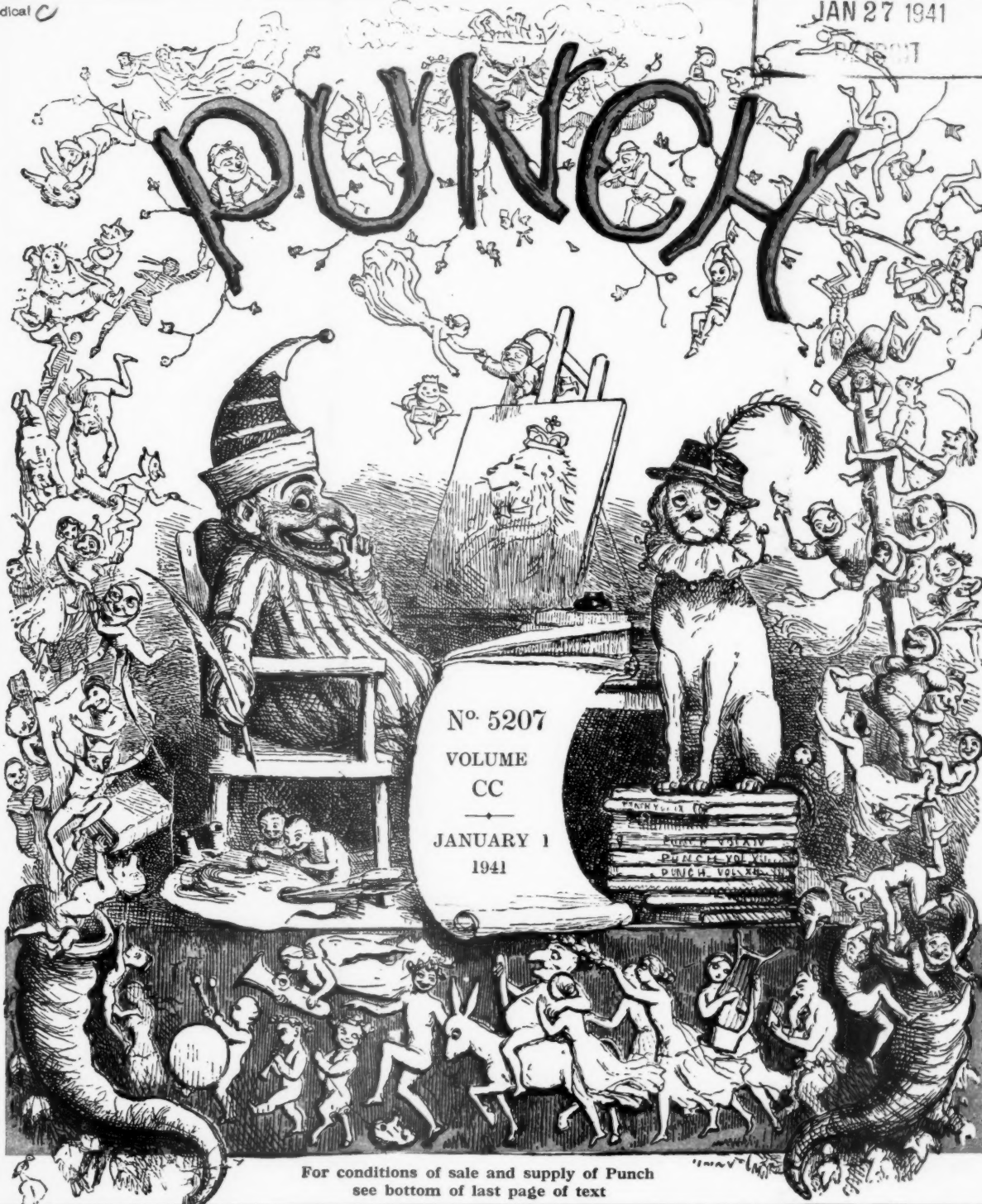
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FOR SLEEP, NERVES AND ENERGY

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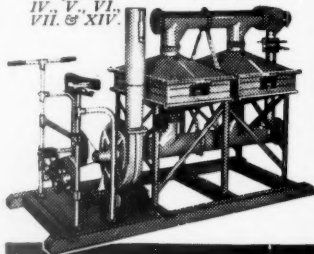
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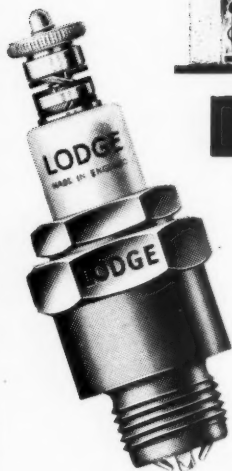
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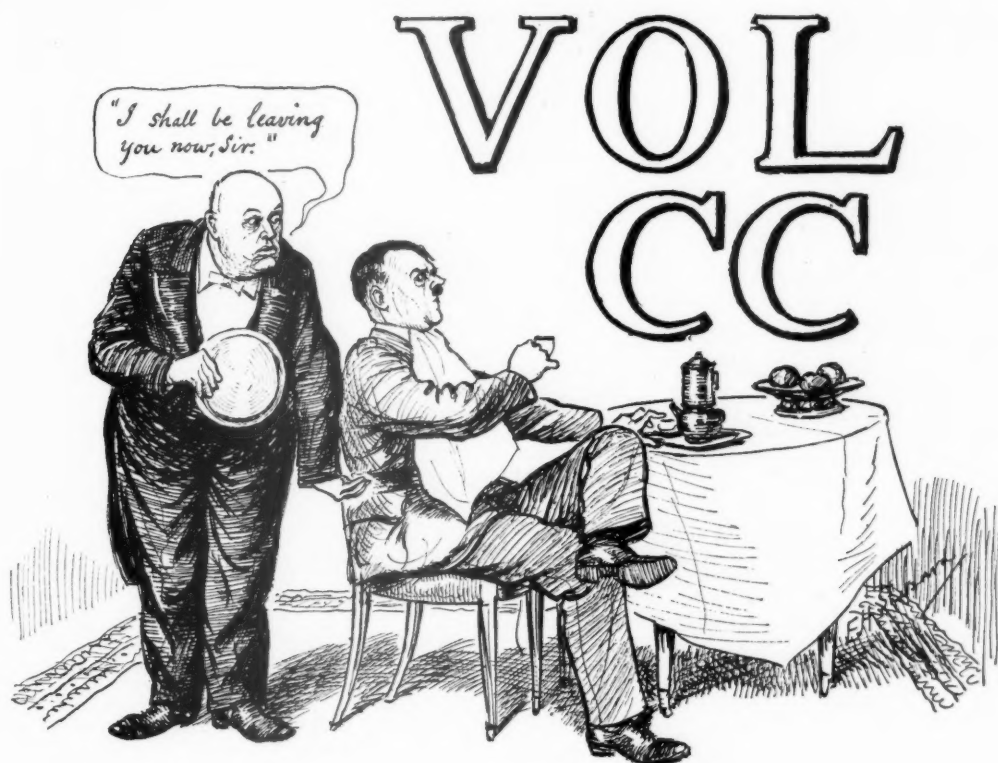
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Twopenny Day

MY hostess turned tragically from the telephone. "Miss T. can't come to-day! Her nephew, the Air Force one, has turned up unexpectedly. And it is our twopenny day."

"Can I do anything?" I asked.

"Indeed you can. You can collect for us in the village, if you will."

I shuddered inwardly, recalling the only time I collected, when my "bag" was the lowest on record.

"Miss T. does it automatically. She finds no difficulty. Thank you a thousand times. I will make you a rough plan of the village for your guidance."

My hostess soon handed me a diagram, rather like the peace-time view of Clapham Junction.

"Follow my pencil," she said. "Leave the 'Duck' on your left. Cross the village green. You are now in Huggs Lane. Call at all the cottages, please, except No. 7. They are Plymouth Brethren and do not subscribe to the Fund, though excellent people

in themselves. When going into the wicket at No. 9, beware of the loose board to your left. It covers the well. The Council are so dilatory. I am sure someone will fall in and spoil the water.

"By the by, just mention that Mary has passed her music exams, will you? Don't stress it, but it will interest the village."

"Turn into 'The Buddock.' Plain sailing to No. 4. Mrs. Bealy there will be waiting with her twopence, but don't ask who that is in the photograph on the round table in the window. You want to get home before the black-out. But she will be interested in Mary's success. After 'The Buddock' comes Miry Way. Mrs. Torry lives at No. 1. She will soon be a hundred and the Rector has promised to write to the King when it happens. We shall have a small celebration in the village—something quiet without fireworks."

"All the people down Miry Way are very agreeable, except Mrs. Simley at 'Bee Chutt.' A ridiculous name for a bungalow, but don't let her know

you think so. Her husband was our mole-catcher and quite illiterate, and he printed the name in his own way. Don't tell her about Mary. Her own daughter learns music. Mrs. Oman at 'Wee Wun' will want change for a £1 note, which she knows you will not have. But be tactful; she is very touchy and easily takes offence. But all the village does that. The Rector says they would take offence at Domesday Book.

"Now climb Steep Hill. It is eight hundred feet, but such a lovely view at the top. Mrs. Parton is at the top. She is very deaf, and really dreadfully touchy. Explain why you have come instead of Miss T., and ask for her subscription. Don't mention that it is twopence. She knows Mary well. Half-way down the hill is a big white house. Mrs. Doggett, our only wealthy. Dip down behind the laurels when you go in the gate, so that she does not see you. Otherwise she may go out the back way. Hill Farm is at the foot. Don't be put off by



"... and usually there are one or two odd things in here to be attended to."

Mrs. Jones's manner. If she raises her voice and says 'Oh my goodness deary me give give what do they think we live on?' smile if you can and say 'Well, Mrs. Jones, how are we going to win the war without your subscription?' Accent on the *your*. Tell her about Mary: it will take her mind off the twopence.

"Down to the mill cottage. It is a perfect picture in the summer, but dampish in the winter. Dear old Mr. Collerbee!—I quite envy you a little chat with him. He fought at Waterloo or Verdun or somewhere, and will tell you all about it. He takes a broomstick and marches up and down over the floor, so quaintly. Miss T. finds him tiresome. Just beyond is Mrs. Jassy, and if you can get twopence out of Mrs. Jassy without a struggle you shall have lemon pudding for lunch. No, I forgot. There are no lemons. Well, apple tart. She is the stingiest, the most—but there, the Rector would say I was uncharitable.

"Up the next steep lane is Mrs. Murke. Don't show any distress when you reach the top, as Mrs. Murke is very touchy if people criticize her lane, as she calls it. Congratulate her on her savoy, will you? The blacksmith's—Veale's—Halbert Jones, all plain sailing. Mrs. Madley at 'Ye Beehive' will be delighted to hear about Mary. Tell her we are having her favourite hymn on Sunday morning and remind me to tell the Rector. Mrs. Sworder at the bakery owes the Fund fourpence. Make a very small joke about it, but don't insist. She takes offence rather easily. I wish we made our own bread.

"Last of all is the general shop, Miss Panier. But if there are any customers, a fat woman with overhanging eyebrows and a striped overall, or the Wilson girls, don't tell her about Mary till they have gone out. Buy a little something. I want a jar of honey rather, or some candles.

"I had nearly forgotten to tell you

about the Joneses. There are five Mrs. Jones, and I want you to make sure you don't get them mixed up. Joe, Halbert, Henry, John and Augustus. Miss T. makes a joke of it, but it rebounds on the Rectory.

"There, that's all. I cannot say how grateful I am for your kindness. Good-bye and the best of luck!"

The Bomber

I WAS a Heinkel bomber,
I flew across the sea
Escorted by twelve Messerschmitts
(They are so fond of me).
We ran into a Hurricane
And things that spat out fire;
I felt my bombs go hot and cold,
My swastika perspire.
The Messerschmitts (the dirty dogs)
Made off for safer spheres.
I was a Heinkel bomber,
But now I'm souvenirs.

Charivaria

VILLAGERS near Berchtesgaden are to give HITLER a New Year gift. There is a feeling that the R.A.F. should present the FUEHRER with an illuminated address.

Italian soldiers are protesting that although the Greeks stopped them they didn't buy one.

As You Were

"British warships have bombarded the various coastal positions involved in the fighting, including Parti, Cularly, Maktila and Sidi Barrani."—*Lincolnshire Paper*.

"Do not miss the chance, which was never offered and cannot be repeated."—*Circular issued by a Singapore firm*.

What about Random?

According to an explorer there is a small island in the South Pacific where the natives have no weapons and know nothing about war. It is too far away, however, to be of any use to Italy.

A Spaniard who has lived in London for 30 years is making preparations for a visit to his native country. He has recently been polishing up his German.



"Where a German soldier stands no other soldier will ever set his foot," said HITLER recently. German soldiers must be very careful strap-hangers.

"One thing apparently HITLER can't do is smoke a pipe," writes a correspondent. Some say it spoils his taste for carpets.

thing of Signor MUSSOLINI.

In the opinion of a newspaper correspondent Herr HITLER may yet make some-Queen of the May, perhaps?

"This resignation coinciding with that of Badoglio is all the more significant in view of the fact that de Vecchi is a political general and a creature of Fascism, who took part in the wagon lit (sleeping car) soi disant (so-called) march on Rome, and whose principle in obtaining respect for the new regime was 'Due minuti de fuoco.'"—*Daily Telegraph*.

At this point the translator went off duty.

The latest Hollywood invention is said to be a method for making Technicolor films appear black-and-white on the screen.

"Nobody knows who will succeed MUSSOLINI as Dictator of Italy," says a writer in a Rome paper. Hasn't HITLER told anybody yet?

MUSSOLINI is said to suffer from lumbago. Ha! Ha! A stab in his back.

"The English Channel was once dry land and it may be so again," says a geologist. Although we doubt if the FUEHRER can afford to wait so long.

Neutral countries were threatened in a recent Berlin broadcast. Switzerland, it was alleged, is massing mountains on her frontier.

It Makes a Nice Change.

"GOATS.—Wanted, Home for year-old Billy Goat, exchange old kitchen chairs or drake."

Advt. in *Somerset Paper*.

A police official declares that all the Fifth Columnists at large in this country would not fill an ordinary village pond. Still, it's worth trying.



"What's the good of going round with a long face? Keep people cheerful," urges a writer. Mr. JACK HULBERT does both.

Wardens are agreed that all the German Air Force has done so far is to drive them from pillow to post.

On his recent visit Dr. GOEBBELS presented one of the Nazi officials in Norway with a gold watch. We don't know whose.

Flat Earth

IT was a favourite pastime of my enemy Parkington (with whom I shared a study at school) to select some inoffensive country from the map of the world, to put it willy-nilly into some other country, and to see how many times it would go.

Nor was he content to pursue this horrid recreation in solitude. With an atlas and a bag of grapes in front of him he would endeavour to suborn me as an accomplice when I was attempting to tie knots in a piece of string or to water the flowers in the window-box. "How often do you think you can put Herzegovina into Canada?" he would say suddenly. Or it might be "How many Germanies, do you say, could be got into China?" or "How many Asia Minors into Brazil?"

"Why put them there at all?" I would ask wearily, but in vain. Useless to plead indifference or incompetence, to squirt ink over the atlas or over Parkington, or to suggest the international difficulties that would almost inevitably follow if he was allowed to have his way.

This thing was quite a mania with him. A boy of more brains and character would have taken the number of square miles in the afflicted areas, done a long-division sum and hidden the result (with a smile of secrecy) from his fellows. But Parkington (I do not know what has become of him) was not interested in decimals; he employed for his fell purpose what was called in our books "A Map of the World on Mercator's Projection," and for all I know or care is called so still. It is the map which, ignoring the tiresome rotundity of the globe and laying it all level before the avid gaze of the conqueror, brings in the most easterly bit of Russia twice over (which always seemed to me unfair); and Parkington worked on it merely by eye with the assistance of a twelve-inch rule taken from the next study but one. He was therefore perpetually doubling up inconvenient corners of Africa to fit them more neatly into Asia, or squeezing the edges of one principality in the heart of Europe to make half a dozen square parcels for export to the wilds of Patagonia or Peru.

He was a good half-back, but superannuated (for invincible stupidity) in his fifth term.

Quite often I yielded to his persecution and helped him to multiply and transplant the territories of the nations and superimpose them one upon another. I dare say I could tell you at this moment the number of French Empires that can be transported and set down in the wastes of Siberia without bulging over at the sides; yet I was glad when Parkington rolled up the map of Mercator and our lives drifted permanently asunder.

About the man Mercator (except that he was one of the most popular diners-out amongst the cartographers of his day) I have learned little in later years. But I do know that he was once arrested and tried for heresy, and only by good fortune escaped being buried alive. Escape, however, he did, to publish eventually his *Compendious Description* (as he called it) of the World and to destroy Parkington's soul.

And perhaps not only Parkington's. Whenever I read or listen to one of the wild speeches of our modern dictators I think they must have sat, as he sat, laboriously fitting the smaller spaces of the world into the larger without the slightest regard for climate or temperament or history. "Even now," the Leader of the German Reich seems to be saying, "you can cram our great country twelve times over into the Dominion of Canada. Why is it not there? Why is it not in India, in Australia, in South

America? Take up the twelve-inch rule and measure us, allow little bits for the edges, and see how often you can plant us in all these places where we are not. The injustice must be rectified. The heart of the Nordic gods (or perhaps of the dead Mercator) is bleeding for our wrongs."

It is curious perhaps that the number of times Germany can be fitted into what is now called the Union of S.S. Republics seems to have escaped the Leader's attention for the moment. But Parkington could have told him. And Parkington could have told Signor Mussolini how often Italy would go into North Western Africa—though not perhaps how often it would go out again. EVOE.

A Thought

THE other evening
just as dusk fell

I overheard a barrage balloon talking to its cable. The latter's remarks were not suitable for reproduction, being couched in aeronautical language; but the general drift and import of them was

that the wire did all the work
and was continually subjected to severe strains,
while the balloon (which got all the glory) merely floated overhead.

"My young friend," replied the balloon
in tones of deepest bass,

"you take a short-sighted view of the matter. It is true that for the duration of the war my position is one of ease and dignity; but what when the war ends?"

Do you suppose they will keep us as pets?"

First Aid in Love

WHEN our phalanges, darling, intertwine,
And your dear metacarpus rests in mine,
I know that I should die, were we to part,
Of comminuted fracture of the heart.

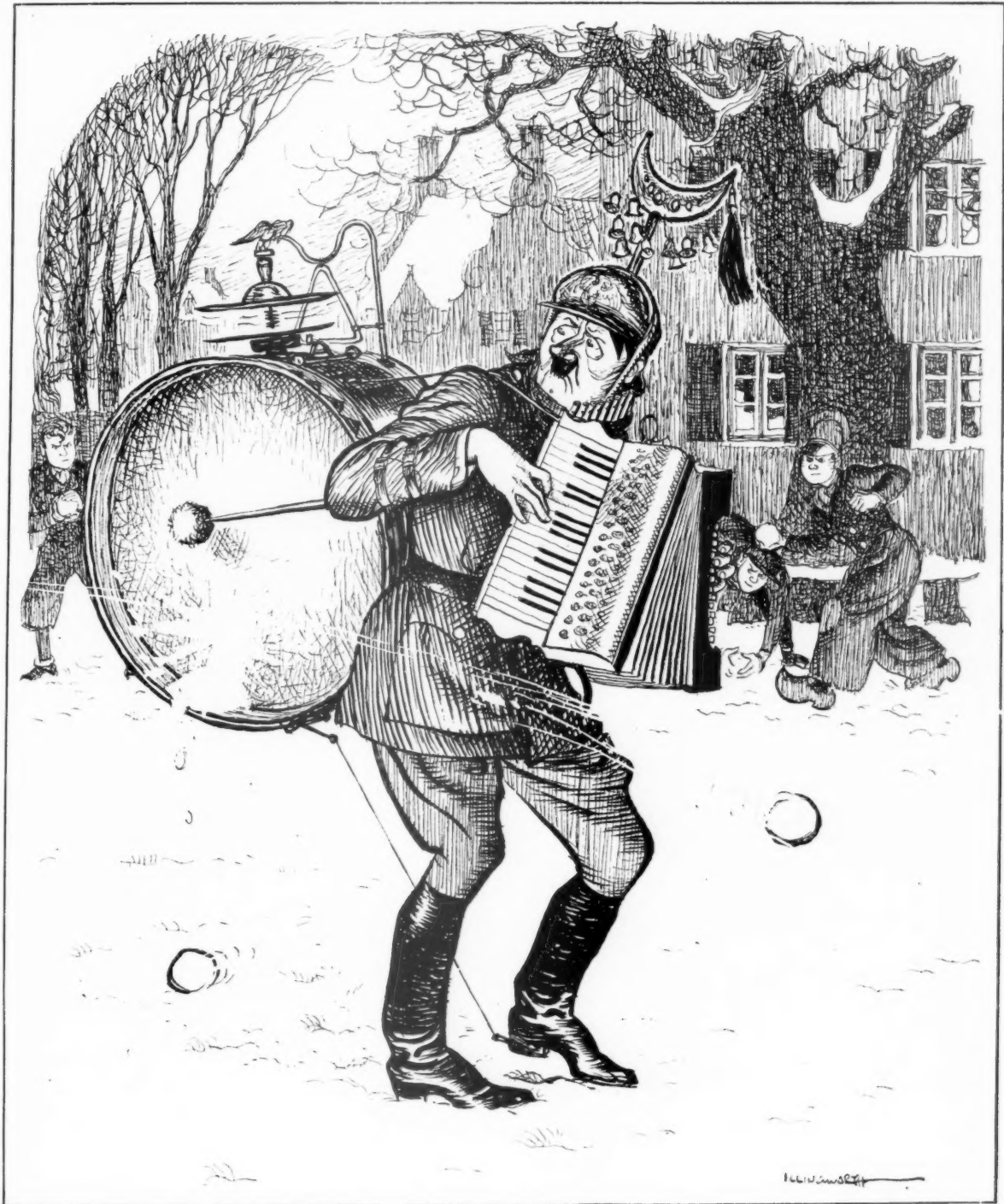
When on my breast your occiput you lay,
And, opening your sweet epiglottis, say
"I love you," I am warmed by that one word
Like a hot compress on my spinal cord.

But if you say, "I love you not," my fate
Is fixed; my pulse-beat does not change its rate;
The coldness of your blood-stream I deplore;
My own remains at 98.4°.

Oh, diagnose me, dearest! Dress my wound;
See that the bandages are firmly bound
(Triangular at least, if not a roll);
Oh, be the antiseptic of my soul!

"... his view of life never leaves a bitter taste even in the mouths of the small minority who do not agree with all of it; there are many, many thousands who consume it with joy to the last dot."—*Daily Mail*.

We never consume dotty views.



THE "CONCERT OF EUROPE"



"Ah! that's our own siren! A rather sweeter note, don't you think?"

Ours Was A Nice Skid . . .

WITHOUT any warning the third telegraph-pole on the right lost all sense of responsibility. From being somewhere in line with the right-hand wing light, viewed from the front passenger seat, it danced away to the left and then moved crazily round to the back of the car. In moments of acute physical crisis some men see their past sins set out before them like bits of old halibut on a fishmonger's slab. Instead I was having a chat with my old headmaster.

"You have been late for chapel fifteen times this term," he was saying.

"Yes, Sir," I replied.

"Have a cigar."

"Thank you, Sir, I don't smoke."

"Drunk, twice."

"Three times, Sir."

"You admit having dropped the box of cartridges down Mr. Humbling's chimney?"

"I am proud of the incident, Sir."

"It is proved to your satisfaction that it was you who applied engine-

grease to the door-handles in School House?"

"Entirely, Sir."

"Very well. I'm afraid there is no other course open to me but to make you a school-prefect."

"Oh, Sir!"

"I am not to be moved to pity. I see a note from your housemaster. Possibly it concerns you. It does. He tells me he came on you last night reading L. T. Meade in the fives court. You are a rebel, Sir! Take your first eleven colours, and get out!"

While this curious incident was being flashed on the screen at the back of my mind, equally extraordinary things were happening to my body, which had become a pea in a large well-camouflaged six-cylinder pod. I was conscious that there was a second pea, for now and then we met for a brief moment before moving off again into space. By the noise, someone appeared to be breaking up a ship near at hand. Then everything was quiet.

"Are you all right?" I asked my companion, for she was sitting on the instruments with her legs laced delicately through the steering-wheel.

"Nothing seems to have come loose," she said. "How are you?"

"Twice the man. At least I shall be when this bump on my head ripens."

"What made you think of wrapping your feet in the roof-net?"

"Sheer devilry. Weren't you saying something important just as all this happened?"

"Only that I shouldn't be surprised if there was ice on the road."

"Oh. Nor should I."

"Let's get out."

"You go first," I said, "in case the owner of that telegraph-pole is waiting for us."

Sunshine-roofs are handy things. We came out on to the grass on all-fours, to find a man in one of those caps with ear-comforters that used to protect Tennyson against blast. He was leaning on a stick and expressing

some secret thought, but it remained secret because his idiom, if you can follow me, was like Chilean breathed sharply through a rubber sponge.

"He may always have been like this," I said. "I suppose he is anxious for us to know that we have had a skid and that our valuable car is upside-down and sprouting grass in all directions." I patted him on the shoulder. "There, there," I murmured, soothingly, "it belongs to the R.A.F."

"Ad a spot of bother?" asked a voice behind me. A lorry-driver stood assessing our condition with a critical eye.

"Nothing much," I said modestly. "Just a little bit off the straight."

To my astonishment the man had the effrontery to agree.

"Yus, you can't 'ardly call that a skid," he declared. "You oughter 'ave seen what 'appened to me and my brother Alfred last week up at 'Ull. 'It a milk-cart, a girls' school and two lamp-posts, and finished up with the engine running and the nose of the old barrer sticking through the window of an 'aberdasher's. That was a skid!"

"It may have been," said my companion sweetly. "But did you ever score a telegraph-pole?"

"Everyday kind of a slip-up, that's what this is," said the lorry-driver, a stern connoisseur. Several vanmen appeared, and a cluster of women from the cottages.

"Blimey, 'ow it's dented!"

"You 'aven't got no right to be alive, you two 'aven't!"

I held up my hand.

"If we have added in our small way to the history of this village," I said, "then I can only say we are proud. But now we must take the road once more, for duty calls. Perhaps you will be good enough to put the remains of the car back on to its feet again, in case it still goes."

Like some vast warrior-beetle badly chipped in the fray, the car hung balanced for a moment on its two side wheels and then bounced down on to four again. Not only did the wheels stay on but the engine started. We got in.

"Be careful," cried the lorry-driver, "or you might easy 'ave a reel accident."

The man with the lobe-comforters leaned in at the window and gave wing to another of his incorruptibly secret thoughts.

"If you ever want to sell that cap," I told him, "just let me know," and I scribbled my phone number on a bit of paper.

"Good-bye!" we shouted. "And thanks." We had scarcely gone a yard when the lorry-driver, obviously much

moved, held up his hand at the front of the car.

"I takes it all back," he said, awe in his voice. "Telegraph-pole in 'alf's a commonplace, spare wheel in the middle of a corn-field's ord'nary, but strike me pink if I've ever seen nettles growing out of the 'eadlight! Shall I tell you what?" he cried excitedly.

"Please," we begged.

"You must 'ave 'ad a skid!"

ERIC.

A Simple Exercise

FOR the guidance of future novelists who, unlike Jane Austen, may not be able to ignore the changes in our times and may want to write about the years 1941 and 1942, the following might be studied.

No prizes are offered.

* * * * *

Before there came the familiar sound of motor tyres crunching the gravel drive she saw the beam of light from head-lamps sweeping towards the house.

Don't bother about lunch for me, I'll just have an egg.

There was a smell of frying onions.

The long monster of a train came to rest alongside the platform of Waterloo punctually on time.

He settled himself in an empty first-class carriage.

In her little car she felt free like a bird. She would often drive three

hundred miles in a day for the sheer joy of it.

From across the fields in the cold crystal air she could hear the peal of church bells.

The left-hand sign-post pointed to Little Biddings, the right-hand one to High Biddings.

They always quarrelled for possession of the glossy weeklies. Jim grabbed *The Bystander*, Betty *The Sketch*, and Eileen took *The Tatler*.

Tom's present to Audrey was two dozen pairs of silk stockings.

It was a mansion of fifty bedrooms, built by one of Marlborough's generals, and in it an eccentric descendant lived all alone except for servants.

Get me six three-halfpenny stamps for these letters, dear, if you are going past the post office.

A letter won't get there until tomorrow. We'd better send a telegram.

Jim telephoned her every evening at eight o'clock. She dared not think what those expensive trunk calls were costing him. Often he would talk for half an hour, just saying, "I love you."

Being a farmer's wife she hated the return to summer-time in the spring.

Seating herself in the hairdresser's chair she said, "A shampoo and set, and give me a lemon rinse."

Her face was as white as her bridal veil, as white, even, Adrian thought, as the cake.

She loved the solitude of the wind-swept shore, where she could walk for miles, at high tide or low, with no one to question her right to be there.



"Jerry? Jerry WHO?"

Little Talks

HAPPY New Year, old boy!
Thanks. Same to you.
 Here's all you wish yourself!
"Happy," no doubt. But "New"?
It looks like being the same old stuff.
 Oh, no! All over by the Derby, old boy. What are you backing?
Will nothing make you take the thing seriously?

Yes, old boy. Can't get pipe-cleaners. That's frightful—really frightful. What a problem!
Soon solved. There'll be no tobacco next.

Who cares? I've always prayed for something to stop me smoking.

What'll you do instead?

Suck bull's-eyes.

Oh, no: sugar.

Chew tea-leaves.

Rationed.

Eat apples.

No more coming in.

Suck lemons.

Can't be got.

Swill milk.

What a hope! It's odd, isn't it, how the virtues seem to go west as soon as the vices—and sooner. All the things they used to say we must do in peace-time—drink more milk, eat more fruit, absorb more sugar, and so forth—all practically anti-social nowadays. The Food Minister says witheringly that our ships have really got something better to do than go about picking up FRUIT...

I know. It's laughworthy. The next thing will be that vitamins are illegal.

Too likely. Any good resolutions?

Yes. I'm not going to call the Wops Wops any more.

Good heavens! But that's practically Fifth Columnal! Why, only the other day you were saying what fun it was—

To be able to call the Wops Wops? I know. But that was before we began to whop the Wop. Now we are turning the tide—

You mean—the tide's turning.

Does it matter?

Rather a lot. A lot of papers and people have started talking about our "turning the tide"—

Why not?

Because it happens to be about the only thing we can't do, and never shall. You may recall a chap called Canute?

Oh, yes, the first totalitarian. All right. Where was I?

You were setting your face against calling the Wops Wops.

Oh, yes. Well, I've enjoyed this little interlude of reality. But I can see the tide revoking or whatever it does,

and this time I want to be ahead of the fashion. We've already started being sorry for the Wops; and I'll bet you, before a few more weeks have flown, the word will go round, from the Foreign Office or somewhere, that we're not to call the Wops Wops, because we've whopped the Wops, and the Wops are defending themselves against the Huns, and the R.A.F. are co-operating with the gallant Wop infantry, and people like you will be liaison officers to the brave Wop Fleet and the delicious Wop Air Force, and what with one thing and another we simply mustn't call the Wops Wops, the poor snails—

I think you're right. But it's a pity. Because I've at last heard a good answer to the Big Question.

What's that?

"Why 'Wop'?"

You mean "Why 'Wop'?"

Yes. I've been asking the question for years. And now a Cambridge man has sent me an explanation. Here's his letter. Listen—or not, as the case may be (you'll remember I've always said that "Wop" came from the U.S.A.):

"I discovered the meaning," he says, "when I got into conversation with a young Italian who was familiar with the U.S.A. After tactful inquiry I learned that there is a word peculiar to the base Neopolitan dialect, spelt 'woppo' (pronounced 'woppo')... My informant suggested that at some time a New York Neopolitan, speaking to an American about another Neopolitan, said 'He ees 'woppo'...' and the word fitted!"

But why did it fit? I don't see.

What does "woppo" mean?

Sorry. I forgot. "Woppo," according to this chap, means "worthless."

Oh, dear! Isn't that frightful? Well, wasn't I right? I'll never call the Wops Wops again.

Better not, I suppose. But life is difficult, isn't it? No sooner does one start a new hobby than it's knocked on the—

I know. Like milk. Or pipe-cleaners.

Where is your gas-mask?

My what?

Your gas-mask? Respirator? Fume-face? Breath-bag?

Well, as a matter of fact—

Do you believe in the "invasion"?

No, of course not. Well, yes. What I mean, he might try it—I hope he will, rather—because, of course, we shall throw him out on his ear—

Shall we? Why?

Well, I mean, we're prepared now—we weren't before...

Are we? Where is your gas-mask? What d'you mean?

I mean just that. Where is your gas-mask?

Well, as a matter of fact... Well, I mean, old boy, one can't carry the darned thing all the time—I mean, not every day—

Which days do you carry it?

What?

Which days do you carry it?

Oh, come, old boy, don't be tiresome!

Sorry. But do you still think you'd like him to try an invasion?

Of course. I mean, we are prepared now, in a way that we weren't—

All right. Where is your gas-mask?

Look here, old boy—

I gather you carry it some days, not all. How do you decide which days?

Well, if you want to know, old boy, I get a daily wire from Hitler, giving his programme for the week.

Oh, well, of course, if that's the case, I say no more.

Anyhow, it's a dog's life.

What d'you mean?

A dog's life? Well, you know as well as I do...

A dog's life? Nothing could be better. A life of ease—the best of food—first-class medical attention. General—national—even cosmic admiration and affection. Not more exercise than you desire—and only when you desire it—"Poor Rover—he wants his walkie-walkie: come on, then"—You've heard that, haven't you?—And the rest of the time you eat, drink, or lie asleep in front of the fire, while the poor remaining members of the human race are toiling and moiling on every side. "A dog's life"! I tell you, it's "the top" in happiness. The dog, in England, is not the Friend of Man, only—he is the King and Conqueror of Man...

True. And yet, if you were to catch Hitler or the Top Wop alone in a dark lane one night (which is the only ambition of every decent Englishman) what is the first thing you'd say—perhaps the only thing? You'd say (just before you choked him): "You Dog!" Wouldn't you?

Well, yes, I suppose I should. It's a queer world, is it not? A. P. H.

Tally-Ho!

"Within a few minutes dozens of British tanks charged into the centre of the camp from the rear, all their guns blazing and their tractors sending up fresh clouds of sand, creating a thick fog over the camp."

Liverpool Paper.

Fugitives

I HARDLY like leaving London just at present," I said to Isobel. "It is true that we are not essential cogs in the capital's machine, but at the same time our going seems rather like running away."

Isobel snorted.

"Rubbish!" she said. "It isn't as if we were going for ever. We shall only be away for a week, and even soldiers in battle have an occasional week out of the front line. You can please yourself, but I'm certainly going. I intend to have seven nights' perfect sleep, and my nights will be between twelve and fourteen hours long."

I yielded. To be perfectly truthful, my protests had been rather half-hearted, because for the past month I have not enjoyed even the comparative comfort of an Anderson shelter. Isobel and her sister have lain in luxury, full-length in the shelter, while I have slept in our wine-cellar. A man named Hoskins, who has spent most of his life getting blown up, examined this cellar carefully and passed the opinion that owing to its peculiar construction it was quite as safe as the Anderson. Isobel then measured it carefully and found that it was exactly five feet long by three feet wide.

"It is the finger of Providence," she said, "almost exactly the same shape as yourself. You will fit perfectly, on a mattress."

I pointed out rather stiffly that I was a few inches longer and a few inches narrower than the cellar, but she replied that in the hour of the nation's peril it was unpatriotic to worry about trifles.

Therefore I slept in the cellar, and my City friends, not unnaturally, have remarked how bent and aged I have been looking. They have hinted rather patronisingly that my morale must have given way. Actually it is only my spine.

So, my feeble protest having been rejected, I telegraphed to the "Three Fishers" inn at Chablow, where Isobel and I have spent many a carefree holiday in less great but more comfortable hours of Britain's history. I asked them to reserve a couple of rooms for Friday (this was on Tuesday) and to wire back that the deed was done. Isobel said that even in these times a wire could not take as long as three days. In some respects Isobel is rather attractively innocent.

When we left our house on Friday morning the reply had not yet come, but Isobel said that she felt in her bones it was all right.

The journey was surprisingly uneventful. We only had five air-raid warnings, and never in places where they were really inconvenient, such as that irritating bit of the Underground where they lock the gates under the river.

Chablow is five hours from London. The first one hundred and fifty miles take about three hours and the last eleven miles take two hours more. The train on this second bit of the journey is so venerable that respect for old age alone restrains well-bred passengers from getting out and walking, unless they have really urgent appointments; and the idea of anybody having a really urgent appointment in Chablow is ludicrous. It is one of those delightfully dead market-towns where the market was abandoned some time in the eighteenth century and where the population ever since has been wondering what to do instead of having a market, and deciding to do nothing except fleece tourists.

Mrs. Gabblegrub at the "Three Fishers" greeted us with a motherly

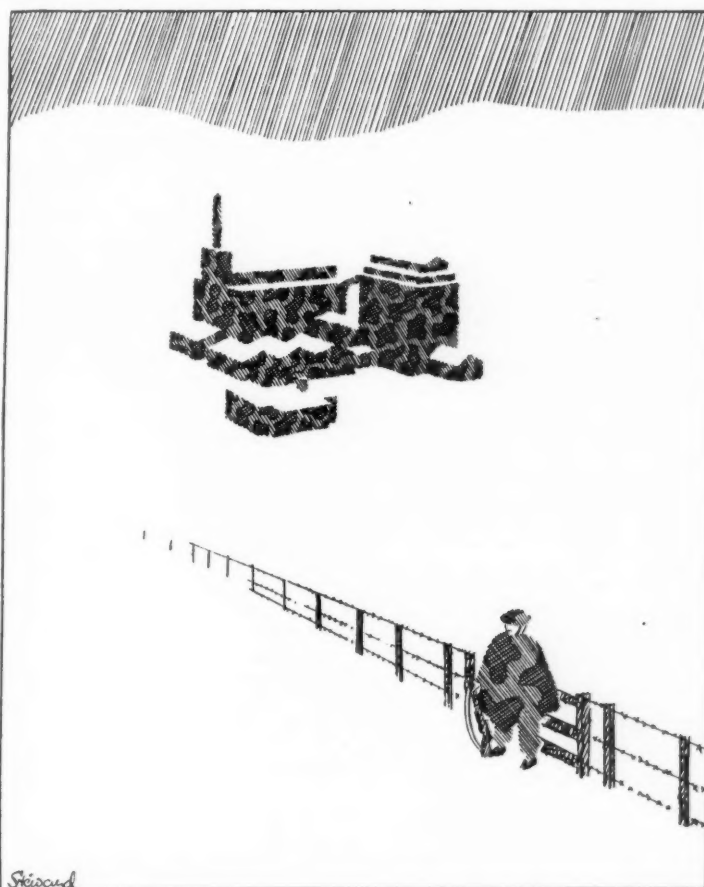
smile and a doubtful eye. She had only received our wire that morning, and really there was nothing available in the house—nothing, she meant, good enough for us.

Inevitably Isobel said that we were not particular, especially in war-time. Just a teeny-weeny room for herself and her sister would do admirably, and her husband would sleep on a couple of chairs.

Mrs. Gabblegrub's face cleared. She showed Isobel and her sister up to a very pleasant little room. Meanwhile Mr. Gabblegrub took me down to the cellar and showed me a sort of assistant-cellar, the exact image of my cellar at home, but a few inches shorter.

He asked me what I thought of it. I did not tell him. I make it a rule never to hurt a man's feelings unless there is anything to be gained by it.

In the morning, however, I remembered an important appointment back in London. The luxurious spaciousness of our deserted Anderson appeared to me much as the Promised Land must have appeared to Moses.



New Year, 1941

BLOW up the trumpets, make a mighty din,
Let the drums mutter and the fifes reply,
If any would subdue us, let him try!
With undefeated head and dogged chin
Throw wide the gates and let the New Year in,
His banner—"Danger!"—streaming down the sky.
We will accept the challenge and defy
The cloudy difficult days that now begin.

He comes a stranger in a time of war,
We needs must give him bed and give him board.
Has he another sterner asking? Or
Does he bear treasure for us in his hoard?
Maybe the garment of a conqueror?
Or added brightness for a waging sword?

Travel-Talk

WELL, dear, all I can say is that we needn't have been so delighted with the train because it was only forty minutes late leaving the station. It's more than made up for it on the way—ha-ha! I don't wish to say anything that sounds in the very least as though I were annoyed or distressed, or anything else at all, because I'm not. If I can shorten the war by so much as one day by sitting in this train continuously from now onwards, I will most willingly do it. But the question is, can I?"

"I really don't think you can, Miss Littlemug."

"That's exactly what I say. And meanwhile, one can't help being utterly wretched—not on one's own account—but thinking of Tom and Esmeralda and the children, all probably freezing on a draughty platform waiting for one. I assure you that, during these last two hours especially, I could really have flung myself out of the train-window time and time again."

"Surely not more than once?"

"There—it's stopping again. Now why?"

"I think perhaps it's because we're at a station."

"Either that, or else we're going to be bombed from the air. There's quite a lot of dive-bombing on trains, I believe. Still, this *sounds* more like a station."

"What station would you say it sounded like?"

"Dear, I don't know this line at all, as I've already told you. Tom and Esmeralda and the children have come to this very remote corner, and all I know is that their station is called Wingley-under-Edge and that Esmeralda's post-card said we ought to arrive before black-out. As I shall tell her, she was completely mistaken there."

"I don't think the porter is calling Wingley-under-Edge, do you?"

"It sounded to me more like Something Town."

"How very strange! To me it sounded more like Shrimpvale or Limpville. One or the other. Which ought it to be?"

"Neither, that I know of. It ought—if the railway timetable is correct, which is extremely doubtful—to be Mossy Bank."

"I don't think it was anything in the least like that, Miss Littlemug."

"It's just occurred to me, dear—I may be entirely wrong, of course—that it might be a Government precaution to call out the *wrong* names and mislead any possible enemies who are on the look-out for information."

"It would also mislead ordinary travellers rather badly, wouldn't it?"

"Still, dear, we must all make sacrifices at a time like this. Anyhow, we're going on now. If that *was* Mossy Bank, the next one should be the one before Tom and Esmeralda and the children. On the other hand, if it wasn't Mossy Bank—and neither of us thought that it *was*—it's going to be difficult. I think, dear, I shall step into the next carriage and find out if anybody there can tell us when we get to Wingley-under-Edge."

* * * * *

"Any luck, Miss Littlemug?"

"It's a most extraordinary thing, but every single person in the train—every single one, without an exception—is either an evacuee who's never set foot out of London before, or a soldier from the extreme North of England who doesn't know anything about this part of the world but has to get on to Land's End to-night. Dear, this train has begun to go at fifteen miles an hour. That means we're running into an air-raid."

"I think it's another station."

"Forgive me, dear, if that was your foot. I just wanted to listen. Does that sound to you like Mossy Bank being called out? To me it sounds more like a kind of shout of 'Mussolini! Mussolini!' but that, I think, would be quite unlike Cornwall."

"It would be quite unlike Mossy Bank, too."

"I'm sorry, dear, if that was your foot again. I feel I really must try to look out. . . . I don't see anything that looks in the least like Tom and Esmeralda and the children. But then, of course, it's pitch-dark, so one couldn't hope to recognize them. What I *did* see was something beginning with B."

"Baggage? Or boxes? Or bookstall? Or it might have been barrow. Can I ask whether it was animal, vegetable or mineral?"

"Dear, this isn't a game. I'm talking about the name of the station. It was hung up in a very inconspicuous place, in very small letters, so as to escape observation, no doubt. But I distinctly made out that it began with B. I think we've rather lost count, and that it must be Bottleby, which means that Tom and Esmeralda and the children are the next station, and *not* the one after the next, as I thought. So in that case we'd better get down the suitcases and my bacon-ration and your hat, and be ready to dart out. It would be a pity to miss it after all and go on with the soldiers to Land's End."

"I think the porter is calling out that Wingley-under-Edge is the next stop."

"What did I tell you, dear? I knew we should have no difficulty when it came to the point. The only thing I do hope is that we shan't find Tom and Esmeralda and the children all lying in a row, frozen to death. I feel that would be such a bad beginning to our visit." E. M. D.

o o

"The collection consisted of paintings and drawings, and included 270 works by Renoir, 30 by Cezanne, 12 by Gauguin, and four by Degas, with others by Monet, Manet and Picasso pert adviser on Customs questions."—*Sydney Paper*.

In his spare time.

o o

"Business. Lecture: 'What does Hitler want?' Tea. Roll Call: Recipes for Eggless Dishes. Social Half-hour." Women's Institute Programme.
Well, he won't get 'em.

Boathanger

VAGUELY, Boathanger had been in my mind ever since the discussion began about the next American ambassador. Then yesterday morning I got a Christmas card from a man living in Totnes; yesterday evening the radio went wrong and, filling in with the gramophone, I found up an old record of Jimmy Dorsey and his orchestra playing a composition called "Shoot the Meat Balls to Me, Dominick Boy!" and to-day my mother told me that the old kitchen table the soldiers borrowed had just been returned by them in much better shape than it was in when they took it. I realized when she pronounced the word "shape" that events were conspiring to make me think about Boathanger. It seems best to set down what I remember of him, before events become impatient and do the thing crudely by causing me to meet him in person, God forbid.

I haven't set eyes on him for thirteen years. He was the only person I ever knew who consistently wore the smile you see on the faces of the people in cheap advertisements—the smile that is put there not to indicate amusement or pleasure or good nature, but merely because the cheap artist cannot draw anything but typical stock "expressions," and the other alternatives (the frown, the glare, the look of surprise, the cough, the sneeze and what I take to be the death-rattle) might baffle or dismay those readers who tried to connect it with the thing advertised. On the face of a living person the constant presence of this smile is remarkably exasperating. The mere look of Boathanger used to rouse some people to fury. I hear he is now married, but when I can work up a mental picture of his home-life at all, I shudder at it.

To be sure, he had certain sympathetic qualities. He was obliging: particularly, he liked to mend or adjust things for people. He once undertook to mend for a man named Stoddard a little pocket holder designed to help one use up old razor-blades. The thread of the screw of this was worn and Stoddard declared that Boathanger would never succeed; but Boathanger was full of confidence when he took it away, and indeed he did bring it back mended. Stoddard was delighted, and often said it was in better shape than he had ever known it to be in; he could not understand how Boathanger had done the job, and Boathanger would not tell him. He told me. He had bought another of the gadgets for sixpence and taken the screw out of that. He had evidently studied the situation and decided that the most could be got out of it if he impressed Stoddard with his mechanical ability and me with his resource.

Another thing he liked to impress on people was his obstinacy, which he called his tenacity. It was a staggering argument he had with two or three of us once about Totnes. He contended for hours that there was no such place and that we were thinking of Widnes (he came from the North himself). Before this discussion was over we had somehow brought in Padstow, Plaistow, Chepstow and Walthamstow, and a small pale man none of us knew much had made a nuisance of himself about Stow-on-the-Wold, where he said his brother-in-law had been stunned by a tile blown off a roof.

Again, it was a most obstinately held opinion of Boathanger's that the Anglo-American situation would be far better if there were no accredited ambassadors at all. "It's the same language," he would say: "we ought to do it all in writing. Postage instead of salary and expenses and all that entertaining and travelling and upkeep—look at the economy!" I don't think he really believed this, but

he liked now and then to have his obstinacy dragged round it.

The style of his conversation was not at all remarkable. Almost the only thing I ever found endearing about it was that where other people would make some such remark as "Well, I'm blown!" Boathanger would say in a tone of astonishment "Well, I'll be a stipendiary magistrate!" But even this grew wearisome after a time.

A final word about his cooking. "It's a funny thing about me," he often said, "I can't so much as boil an egg properly or make a piece of decent toast, but you should taste my rissoles. I can work up good rissoles out of anything, anything at all. I've sometimes toyed with the idea of having them tinned or put up in waxed paper or something. Boathanger's Meat Balls, how does that sound?"

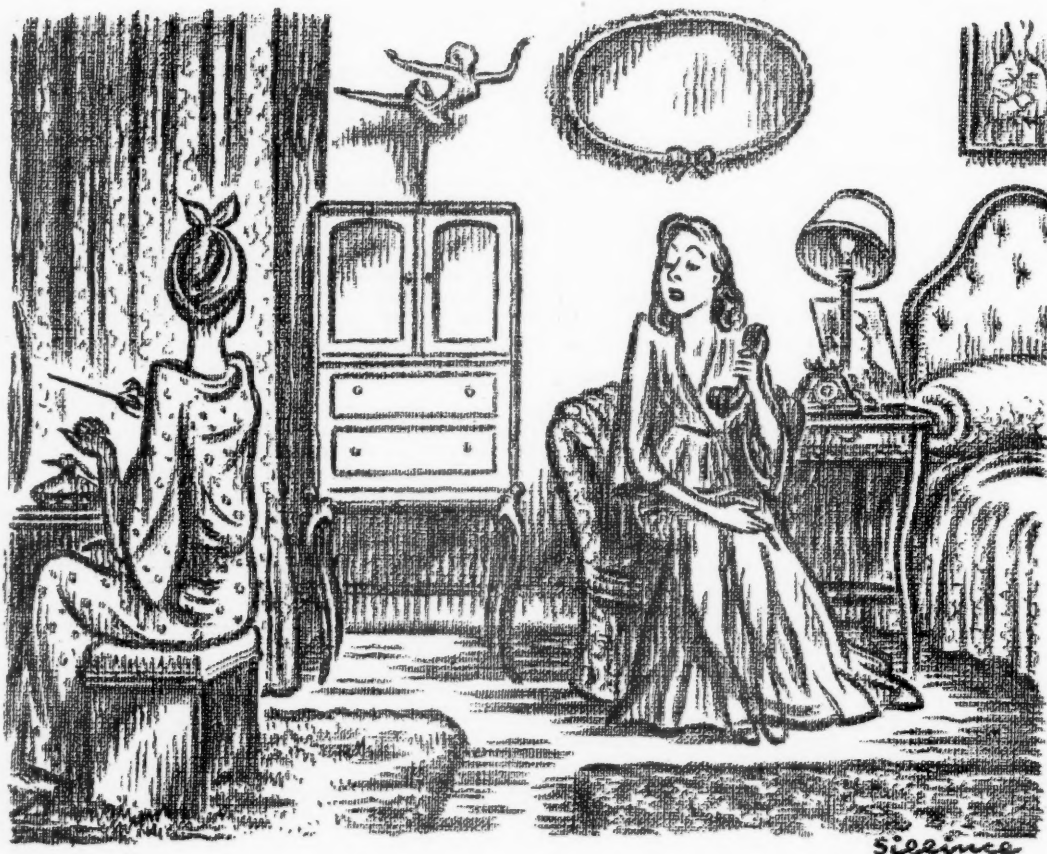
"Unappetising," someone once replied. Boathanger was hurt.

Well, I don't suppose all this gives much of a picture of Boathanger, but it is what I remember. Now that these trivial things have reminded me of him I can't get him out of my head. Not for a long time, I should imagine, am I likely to forget him again, any more than anyone who has heard recent news read out, by a radio announcer or anybody else, is likely to forget the fact that the *Tuscaloosa* is a croosa. I have a nasty feeling that I shall meet him soon, walking past Charing Cross Station or coming into the bar of Shephard's Hotel, Cairo, with everybody else in the world. When I do, he will undoubtedly get me to lend him a pound.

R. M.



"I'd like you to think up something catchy for the window, like 'Hitlers may come and Hitlers may go, but Murdoch and Wimpey were established in 1783.'"



"It's a nuisance the way they don't always answer during raids. My call might have been necessary."

Old Men

WE are too old. And these are mere winners of wars, these boys in the last of their teens, hair in their eyes,

sea-wind in their faces, hearts singing above the song of engines thrown to the compass-points of the skies.

We are too old; it is ours to prepare for them against their return the groundwork of victory. But they too will be old then, and the stratagem of Life and Death will be there in their eyes to see.

Old men all of us, we in our years and they in things seen, in the waves, in the deserts, in trails of the sky . . .

remembering peace as it was, hot and restive with hate, fear and money; old men, they, and you, and I.

Let us, dear God, know this in the last grey months of war, that the old men have earned their rest, and must not be there

when the world is fashioned again from its inmost core to the sea and the forests and curved savannahs of air!

Only the very young then, the boys and girls of to-day at schools on the Orinoco, here, or the Caspian Sea, can be young enough and clear enough to think and be able to say

"This is the world we imagined and will make it be."

* * * * *

We are too old, and those who will win this war. Ours is to watch the young, and kneel to them at their birth;

and our old hearts can hope it will never be as before when the old rich men came out and gave us an old man's earth.



THE DRAGON-SLAYER

"So much for that one, and now to face the next."



Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND

(Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940)

THIS Fund, which was originally started in order to purchase supplies of raw material and distribute them to Voluntary Working Parties for the Hospitals, has already sent out a very large quantity of Knitting Wool, Unbleached Calico and Veltex, as well as many other materials of all varieties, to be made up into comforts for the wounded.

The number of casualties now caused by the indiscriminate bombing of London and our other great cities has made it necessary to extend the operation of our Fund to the provision of medical and surgical supplies for civilian hospitals.

At the same time the approach of winter is causing a renewed demand on behalf of all the Services—especially amongst the men whose duty lies in exposed situations—for Balaclava helmets, gloves, mittens, woollen waistcoats, and the like.

Mr. Punch, in expressing his very sincere gratitude for the generous help already given by subscribers, renews therefore his appeal both for the sake of the Fighting Services and of civilians who have suffered from the ruthless barbarity of the enemy, in the hope that plenty of supplies may be available for all now that the severest and coldest weather has set in.

Though we know well that these are days of great financial difficulty, we yet ask you, those who can, to send some donation, large or small, according to your means, to **PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND**, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.



"Of course it's more or less a trick."

The Piano

I EXPECT you can remember how when the wireless was invented people wondered what would happen to pianos. They said pianos would go out. A bit later they said they would come back. So it has gone on. Actually of course a piano hardly ever does either, because it has to have its top, front and legs taken off before you can get it through the door. This makes it different from any other musical instrument people have about the house. Another difference is that a piano is the only instrument which is also *furniture*. Another difference is the sound it makes, but I'm not going into that, because all musical instruments make different sounds from one another, or should, and it would get me nowhere.

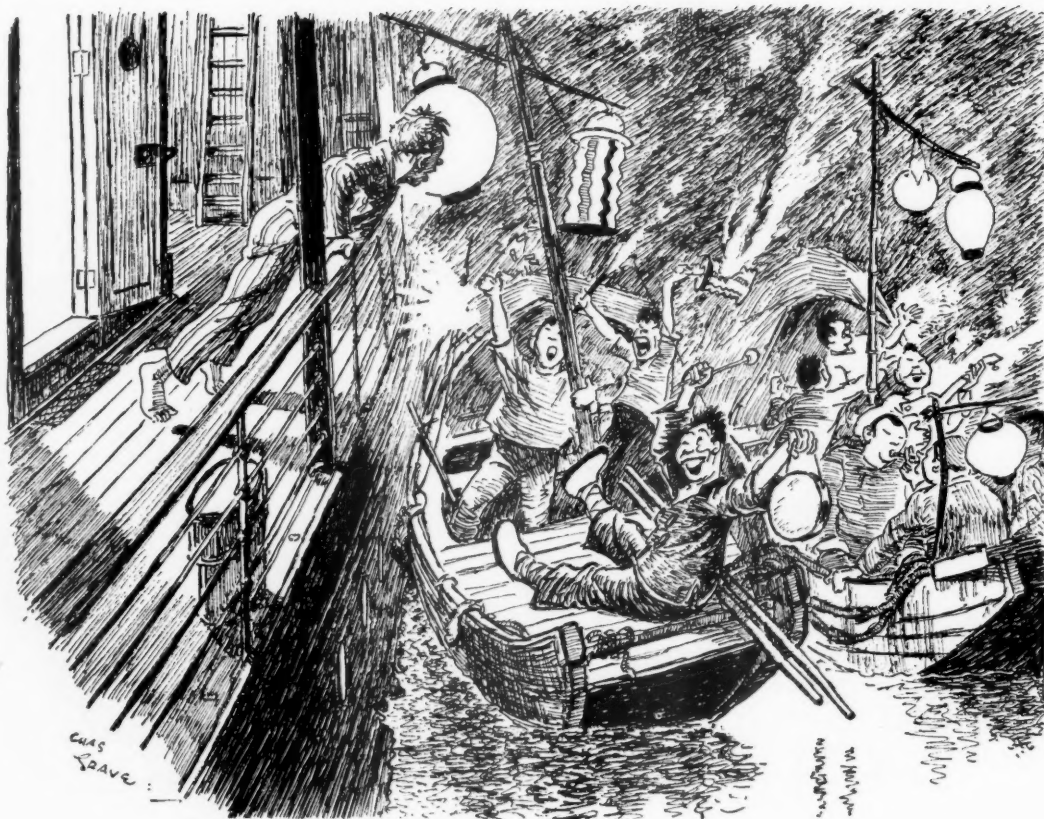
Well, to go back to a piano being furniture. It is probably this which has made the piano more popular than any other musical instrument, in spite of being so big. When people go into someone else's drawing-room and see,

for example, a 'cello, they practically never say "What a nice 'cello!" This is because their self-preservation instinct has got it through to them in a flash that *no one has a 'cello without being able to play it, and that that person may be in the room*. It is only the people with 'cellos of their own who, when they see someone else's 'cello, sometimes cut across this instinct; and even these people, when they hear it starting up, may wish they hadn't said anything. But anyone can say "What a nice piano!" and mean no more than that it is nicely polished.

You will have noticed that there are two kinds of piano—tall and thin or long and flat. The tall thin piano is put across a corner of the room, only because it makes a space for old magazines. The long flat piano can be put in several different positions; and, by the way, if it has the keyboard under the window, and the top propped up with a stick, some people pretend

not to see it. But this is not really necessary, as so many people play the piano that the person who says "What a nice piano!" may be wanting to play it, not to hear someone else. This has put piano-owners on their guard, and the whole thing cancels out. Oh, and by the way, if the top of a tall thin piano is open it doesn't mean anything. Only that someone has dropped something down inside.

If you look closely at the black keys of a piano you will see that they are grouped in twos and threes. If you look even more closely at the white keys you will see that the middle twelve are dirty. This is because people who play the piano with one finger like the middle twelve white keys best; they have to use a few black ones sometimes, but the dirt wouldn't show there. The white keys at either end of the keyboard are very, very clean; this is because no one can count up all those little lines you get in a piece of music when it wants to tell



"To bell with your Happy New Year!"
"Tank you, Sar! and dam your Melly Clistmas!"

you to play a note right at the top or right at the bottom.

Except when they drop something inside, few people know much about the works of a piano. All they know is that when you press one of the keys a little hammer jumps up inside and hits something. They have figured this out from watching piano-tuners, who know how to take the front off and get it back again. Some people go further and find out which key works which hammer, but they find they can do nothing *with* this knowledge. So they stick to working the outside of the piano, which takes a very long time to learn.

People start learning the piano when they are eight or so, with both hands playing the same thing, though of course some little way apart. They go on like this for months, sometimes with their music mistress playing an

awful lot of notes at the other end of the piano. This is called a duet, and the point of it is to make the people learning the piano think they are getting on faster than they are.

The next stage is for one hand to play one thing and the other another. This sounds more difficult than it is, because all that the left hand does is to hop backwards and forwards on two notes. The next stage is for one hand to play several notes at once; then for *both* hands to do this. Next comes finding out that the loud pedal, the one on the right-hand side, joins all the notes together as long as you keep your foot on it, while the soft, or left-hand, pedal makes no difference.

By this time the person learning the piano will be eleven. Some people stop when they get so far; some go on till they are eighteen, a few even

longer. But, whenever you stop, it counts as being able to play the piano.

But the most difficult thing about playing the piano is not playing it but turning over the pages of the music. To begin with, you *must* have one hand free for at least five seconds before you are due to turn over, and this may not always be possible. Then if you don't pull the page hard enough it sticks in the grooves of the music rest; and if you do, the whole music-book will fall down and ruin everything. If you get someone to turn over for you it is even worse, because that person hasn't your chance of checking how far you've got on the page by the notes you are playing. The only way out is to do what even real pianists, ones on platforms with pianos with the tops propped open, have had to do—learn the music by heart.

Table Feud

RED LION, PEACEHAMPTON,
Friday.

DEAR LIONEL,—I arrived safely and the room at the hotel overlooks the cemetery. Of course when we wrote to book it we thought of everything else, such as near bathroom and not overlooking main street, but cemeteries never occurred to us. However, we must remember about it in the next war if I have to evacuate again.

I could not get a table to myself for meals, but have to share a large one in the window with a Mr. Grabber and his wife. About eighty, and he was in something to do with garden-rollers, though I must say he does not look it.

Our table is in the midst of a deadly feud with the table in the next window, which is inhabited by three of the most grim-lipped people I have ever seen—a Captain Peat, who fought in some war ever so long ago (Mr. Grabber says it was the Crimea), a Mrs. Chancelot, who is the widow of a head brewer and looks like it, and a man with one eye, named Robertson-Smith, who is a conductor, though whether buses or orchestras I do not know.

There have been preliminary skirmishes between our table and this one in the past, before I came, mostly about marmalade and cheese. At breakfast there is only one jar of marmalade for each two tables, and we have to share ours with the grim-lipped table. One morning my predecessor at the table, a Miss Cupper, absent-mindedly scraped the pot absolutely clean and then passed it on to the next table with a charming smile.

From that moment, of course, the gloves were off. During the day Captain Peat and Mrs. Chancelot and Mr. Robertson-Smith were to be seen in dark corners with their heads close together, plotting revenge.

At dinner they launched their counter-offensive. Our two tables share the same dish of cheese. The waiter puts it on the other table and asks Captain Peat if he will kindly pass it over to us when he has done with it. With a reckless disregard for their own digestion the grim-lipped trio took every scrap of cheese there was, replaced the lid, and solemnly handed the empty dish to us.

This was the situation when I arrived, but since then an event has occurred compared to which the previous exchanges were no more than "slight patrol activity," as they used to say in the old Maginot days. The

Peat-Chancelot-Robertson Axis have launched a blitzkrieg against us on the sugar front with a callous disregard for Inter-Table law unparalleled in history.

Lump sugar, I should explain, is dealt out individually by the waiter, two small lumps for each person at breakfast and tea. With this even the cunning sub-human brain of the dastardly Captain Peat cannot tamper. Soft sugar, however, is issued weekly to each table in old liver-salt tins, which are kept in the table-drawers.

On Tuesdays we have stewed apples and custard, and it is the custom on this occasion to use up about half the meagre weekly ration of soft sugar, the other half being reserved for Fridays, when we have apple pudding.

Last Tuesday, as it happened, Mr. and Mrs. Grabber went up to London for the day, and Miss Cupper was too ill to eat stewed apples and custard. The Peat-Chancelot-Robertson trio, on the other hand, were seen by Miss Cupper to let themselves go with reckless abandon, almost emptying their tin.

When we sat down to lunch to-day Mr. and Mrs. Grabber's faces were wreathed in smiles at the prospect of

eating their apple pudding with a full week's ration of sugar. The Axis appeared to be gloomily regretting their extravagance of Tuesday. This, however, was evidently mere subterfuge, because when the apple pudding arrived and we opened our respective tins, the Axis tin was full and ours was nearly empty.

I really thought for a moment that Mr. Grabber would walk across and fell Captain Peat to the earth with a water-jug. Mrs. Grabber, however, managed to restrain him. We spent all the afternoon in secret conclave, and though I am not at liberty to reveal details at the moment, I may just hint that we are contemplating a flank attack on the enemy's most vulnerable point—his butter.

Yours affectionately,
EDITH.

P.S.—Rather an awkward sequel has occurred since writing the above. We successfully intercepted the Axis butter-rations at dinner, and then found that Captain Peat and his friends were absolutely innocent about the sugar. It appears the cleaners had been busy in the room and accidentally changed the tables.



At the Pantomime

"ALADDIN" (COLISEUM)

IT used to be the habit of pantomime "to cease upon the midnight" or even later. Now, for reasons of general convenience, it begins upon the midday and has already started to repeat itself by tea-time. But though times may change, themes do not. The old Success Stories never fail. *Whittington* on the home front, *Aladdin* in the Far Eastern station, continue to exemplify the merits of Going To It. I must confess to a certain preference for *Whittington*; he embodies everything British—self-help, kindness to the pets, the colonial career, wealth from overseas, and the final promotion from commoner to knight and from shop-counter to Guildhall. *Aladdin* is rather less sympathetic; none the less, he is almost an ally, and one can hardly call him alien.

So he always turns out to be more of a London laddy than an Arlardeen of our Wardour Street Bargard and its Drama Allah-mode. His mother's laundry (at least upon our stage) is far closer to Peckham than Pekin. And the lady herself—how did a *Mrs. Twankey* invade the Oriental scene? In a sense she belongs there, for Twankey appears to be a corruption of Twankai. Twankai, to the Victorians, was the source of tea and therefore, like Burton or Burgundy, a name for the drink itself. "Will you take a cup of Twankai?" is good Thackerayan English. So *Mrs. Twankey* is the tea-drinking lady, though of course it is accepted as a rule that she adds a drop of "tiddley" to the Twankey. At any rate, there she usually is, as native as *Mrs. Crusoe* or the *Baroness Hardupp*, arms akimbo, feather-bow'd and frowsy, or preposterously parading the lighter modes of the moment, from the jocose hat that is a bit of tip-tilted nothing to the kind of shoes that apparently meant to be boots and then funk'd it half-way.

Mr. FRANCIS LAIDLER's pantomime, bravely presented at the Coliseum (and with some taste, too, the Willow Pattern Scene

being delightful to look at), sticks fairly close to China and to the traditional story of the Lamp. There are allusions of course to such war-time matters as shelters and shortages, but the jokes

about the food problem do not exceed their ration. The custom orders these things; what it does not command is a Dame of the feminine sex. Miss IRIS SADLER makes the unusual practice a very pleasant one.

This *Mrs. Twankey* is a very spry and sporting creature who can send a brace of policemen flying with the ease of a boxer and the grace of a ballet star. She is properly free with the dough in the kitchen or with the "smalls" when she hangs out the washing on the Pekin line. She is none of your bridling, bullying dames, but a very affable lady indeed, with a nice style of conducting any argument with the Oriental world upon the stage or the Western gentleman in the orchestra pit. *Mrs. Twankey* has discovered a gay and airy personality and we were very pleased to meet her.

The part of *Wishee-Washee* is taken in the true and professional style with plenty of relish and a nice vein of absurdity by Mr. JERRY VERNON, who joins with Mr. SUTHERLAND FELCE (*Abanazar*) in many comic passages, including an agreeable piece of nonsense about an invisible stranger supplying invisible favours. True, it is not a novel form of fun, but this time it seems to come off. Mr. FELCE is attended by a *Slave of the Lamp* who pops up from down under, as such creatures should, and the sticklers

for pantomime tradition will be delighted to note that the characters on the programme are divided, as of old, into Immortals and Mortals.

They are all immortals really, even *Blotto* the dog, who might be a Pekinese and most certainly is not. *Aladdin* himself is played with a captivating swagger and a tuneful voice by Miss JEAN COLIN, who goes from kitchen to cave and from peril to prosperity in such a friendly and amusing way that the audience will find him just as good company as any of the comedians, which cannot always be said of Principal Boys.

Let me explain that I saw this pantomime on a cold and frosty morning, which may be seasonable but is none the less not the best time or weather for industrious comedians, especially in a very big



WISHFUL DRINKING

Wishee-Washee. . . Mr. JERRY VERNON
Abanazar Mr. SUTHERLAND FELCE



TWANKEY SMILES

Aladdin Miss JEAN COLIN
Blotto Mr. BILLY PURVIS
Widow Twankey Miss IRIS SADLER



"May we forget our gas-masks this morning?"

house like the Coliseum. If the show seemed now and again to be a little thin and less than properly rowdy, that I shall attribute to the hour and to the east wind. Given the large after-Christmas crowd and a warmer circumstance and all should go, as they say, with a roar. There is quite enough that is good to look at, including the admirable and inevitable TILLER girls. Whether the scene be laid in Wapping, Peru or Pekin, pantomime demands their presence and fortunately gets it. There is also enough to laugh at and there would soon, I thought, be far more.

I. B.

Loud and Prolonged Applause

"Behind the thanks infantry are following up with all speed."—*Glasgow Paper*.

"£625—No Ground-Dent."

Property Advt. in West-Country Paper.
Yel.

Puffing Billy

(Dedicated to an unidentified railway engine)

OFt in the stilly night
(There *was* a time when nights
were stilly)
I have lain, unhappy wight,
Sleepless as an anchorite,
Muttering from dark till light
"Curse that Puffing Billy!"

Lain in some foul hotel
That fronted on the railway station,
Heard the goods-yard chorus swell,
Heard the locomotive's yell,
Saying to myself "Oh, hell!"
Likewise "Oh, damnation!"

Had then some strolling seer,
Some perambulating prophet,
Come and whispered in my ear
"These are sounds of hope and cheer
One day you'll be glad to hear,"
I'd have said, "Come off it!"

Yes; then the other eve
Jerry and his blamed banditti
Set our earth and sky aheave—
Such a wise you'd not believe—
While they struggled to achieve
Blitzkrieg on our city.

Then, 'midst this beastly din,
For the nonce less omnipresent,
I could hear new sounds begin,
Slowly, softly creeping in,
Homely sounds to peace akin . . .
Lord! they were so pleasant

That I could not hear enough;
Here amid this blitz and battle
This unearthly blind man's buff,
One old stager did his stuff;
Just the same old chug-and-puff,
Same old toot-and-rattle.

Under all that horrid mob
Night's imperial calm affronting—
Sweet as corn upon the cob,
Kind as kettle on the hob,
Puffing Billy at his job
Resolutely shunting.

H. B.

Veracity in Lambeth

THERE was a loud knocking at the door of 61, Cosham House, Lambeth.

"Drat it," said Mrs. Pinkin. "We git caught on the 'op so many times we might as well be kangroos. Well, go on, someone," she shouted. "See 'oo it is."

Miss Tillie Pinkin, who had paused in her study of *Bandaging for Beginners* to hold an imaginary but mutually flattering conversation with a dashing young general whose life she had snatched from the very throat of death, looked up dreamily. "I can't go, Ma," she said.

"Got yer clothes on, 'aven't you?" said Mrs. Pinkin.

"Ar," Tillie said, "but I'm not dressed. You go, Pa."

"'Oo, me?" said Mr. Pinkin. "Me go to the door, you mean?"

"Whatever give you *that* idea?" said Mrs. Pinkin, as she walked into the hall.

When she opened the front door a short, plump, khaki-clad youth smiled toothily at her. "Mrs. Pinkin?" he said.

"I'm not denyin' it," said Mrs. Pinkin. "'Oo're you?"

The youth forced several more teeth into prominence.

"Privit Dovey, bloon barrage," he said. "Jimmy Dovey. Pal of Perce Pinkin's. Perce said to be sure an' call."

"Oh," said Mrs. Pinkin. "In that case——"

"Ta," said Private Dovey, stepping into the hall. "Bin a nice day."

"'Oo for?" said Mrs. Pinkin. "'Uman bein's or 'ousewives?"

"Quite so," said Private Dovey, wiping his boots on the carpet so as not to soil the door-mat. "Do I go in 'ere?"

He walked into the living-room and thrust a plump hand at Mr. Pinkin. "Perce's Pa," he said. "Don't 'ave to tell me. Got 'is Dad's nose. Got 'is Dad's brains too, so 'e says."

"Still," said Mrs. Pinkin, "even if 'e's not bright 'e's a good lad. An' this," she went on, "this is my daughter Tillie. Perce's sister."

"She's 'er aunt's niece too," said Mr. Pinkin, "in case you wouldn't guess."

"Well, well, well!" said Private Dovey as he suited the action to the word by treating Tillie's arm as a pump-handle. "Well, Perce is a liar. 'Any sisters?' I says to 'im. 'One,' says Perce. 'Good-lookin'?' I says. 'Ardly,' says Perce, 'you'd never think we was brother an' sister.' But now—— Well, I meaner say."

Tillie patted her hair. "'Ow's Perce gettin' on?" she said.

"Fine!" said Private Dovey. "Not like me. I'm alwers gettin' orf. Gels? I jus' bowls 'em over."

"Ar," said Mr. Pinkin. "A moter-cyclis'."

"Firs' time I 'eard that one," said Private Dovey, "I fell outa me pram."

"On y'r 'ead?" Mr. Pinkin inquired.

"On the cont'ry," said Private Dovey. He glanced round the room. "Nice place you got 'ere," he said. "'Ullo, 'oo's the bandidge expert?"

"Me," Tillie said, "but I wouldn't 'ardly call meself expert."

"She c'n unwind 'em," Mr. Pinkin explained, "but not round anythin', if you get me."

"Fine work, though," said Private Dovey. "Florence Nightingale in the Crimerian, an' all that. Needs a gentle touch. Some of these 'efty Amazoons neely bandidge the breff outa you. As I alwers says, we mus' be thankful for small nurses. See? That's me all over. Service wiv a smile. Them Narzis 'aven't got no sense of 'umour. Fatal."

"'Aven't got much to laugh at, 'ave they?" Tillie said.

"They've got 'Itler," said Mrs. Pinkin.

"Well, 'e's not much, is 'e?" Tillie said.

"Ar," said Private Dovey. "'E may be a 'ousepainter, but 'e makes a poor do of whitewashin' is intentions. Them Eyetalians too. We'll give 'em beans."

"Runners," said Mr. Pinkin.

"Quite so," said Private Dovey. "'Ad tea yet?"

"No," said Mrs. Pinkin. "We was jus' goin' to when you come."

"Ta very much," said Private Dovey.

"Not at all," said Mrs. Pinkin. She brought the tray in from the kitchen.

Private Dovey helped himself to a slice of cake and then turned his attention to Tillie.

"Know Carole Lombard?" he said. "Lovely gel. Looks. Brains. Ev'rythin'."

"She cert'nly is a credit to Mr. an' Mrs. Lombard," Tillie conceded.

"Quite so," said Private Dovey. "Pers'nly meself, though, I think you're a 'eap nicer 'n she is."

"Well," Tillie said, "I s'pose we both 'ave our points. Perce told you about Sid Puckle, though, didn' 'e?"

"Ho, yerse," said Private Dovey. "Not pertickly athletic. Not pertickly nothink."

"'E's a very, very, very, very, very nice feller," said Mrs. Pinkin.

"Very," said Mr. Pinkin.

"I don't doubt 'e appeals to parents," said Private Dovey. "But you know wot parents are."

"You got any brothers or sisters?" Mr. Pinkin inquired.

"No," said Private Dovey.

"That's progress," said Mr. Pinkin. "People not makin' the same mistake twice."

"Quite so," said Private Dovey cheerfully. "Did Perce write an' tell you about the corp'ral in the A.T.S. 'oo's crazy about me?"



"No," said Mrs. Pinkin. "'E alwers writes very interestin' letters."

"Lovely gel," said Private Dovey. "But not my type. That's me all over. Never afraid ter say no."

"Won't you 'ave the las' piece of cake?" Tillie said. "Seems a pity to part it from the rest."

"Ta," said Private Dovey. "Very nice too."

"That's nice ter know," said Mr. Pinkin, "if it's on'y by 'earsay."

Private Dovey glanced at the clock. "Crumbs!" he said. "I'll 'ave to be shovin' orf. Gotta call to make at Clapham."

"Jus' in time f'r supper," said Mrs. Pinkin.

"Well," said Private Dovey, "thanks for a pleas'nt time. I'll be seein' you, Tillie." He picked up a loose almond from the cake-dish and went.

"An' ter think Pharo an' 'is crowd grumbled about a plague of locus's!" said Mr. Pinkin.

Private Dovey returned to Cosham House on the following afternoon. "Like me noo coloured cap?" he said to Tillie. "Very snappy. Speshal walkin'-out dress."

"Walkin'-out?" Tillie said. "Reely, Jimmy? Wiv you?"

"Ar!" said Private Dovey. "Knoo you'd give in sooner or later. P'raps we'll 'ave a stroll after tea."

"No," Tillie said, "I jus' can't wait. It's now or never. That's me all over."

Miss Tillie Pinkin accompanied Private Dovey to the Kennington Road. "I jus' gotta call in at the boys' club," she said. "You may's well come."

She led the way into the gymnasium. At the far end, watched by a gape of boys, a tall young man in singlet and flannel-trousers was doing his best to knock the hide off a punch-ball.

"Hullo, Tillie," he said. "Who's the friend?"

"Name of Dovey," Tillie said.

"My name's Brown," said the young man. "Care to put the gloves on?"

"Well," said Private Dovey, "p'raps I'd better not, not between meals."

"How's Perce?" Mr. Brown said.

"Fine," Tillie said. "'E asked me to tell you 'e's met a feller in the searchlights as'll take you froo ten rounds."

"Grand!" said Mr. Brown.

"Well," Tillie said. "Good-bye f'r now."

"Cheero!" said Mr. Brown.

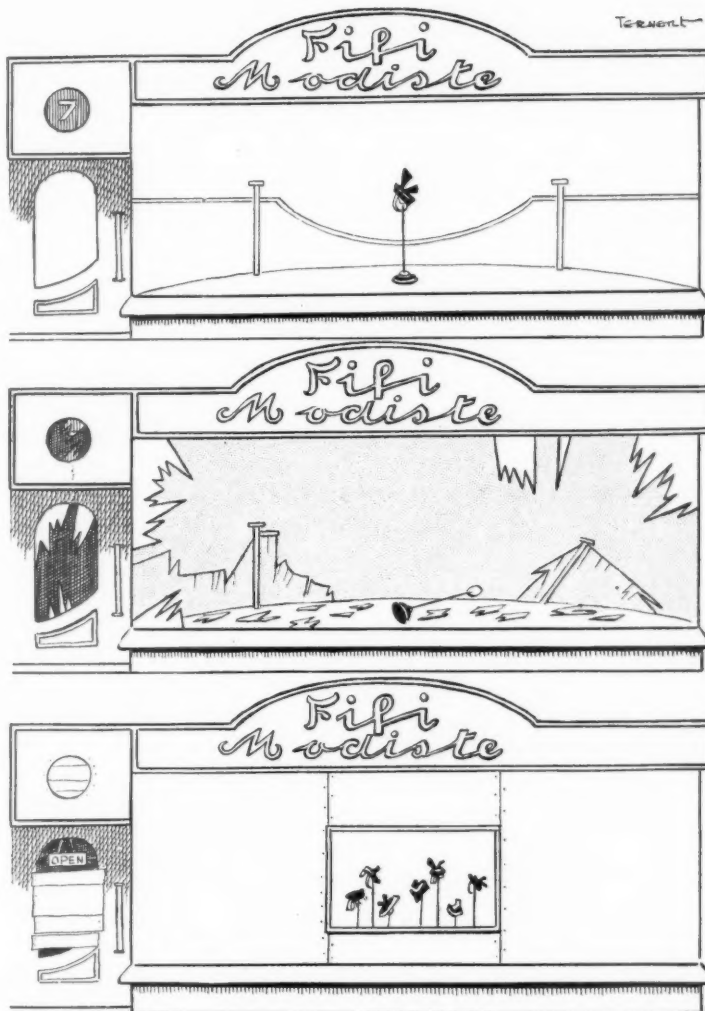
"'Oo's the win'mill?" Private Dovey inquired anxiously when they were outside.

"Gotta punch like a lan'-mine," Tillie said.

"Speaks nice too," said Private Dovey. "'Oo is 'e?"

"All bein' well," Tillie said, "'e's gointer marry me some-time nex' year."

"Gointer wot?" shouted Private Dovey. "But wot about Sid Puckle?"



"You 'eard me," Tillie said. "I've seen 'im smash a cokernut wiv a single blow."

"Cool!" said Private Dovey. "Is that clock right? I'll 'ave ter be shovin' orf. Gotta call ter make in Stockwell. Lovely gel. So long!" He jammed his cap on his head and walked briskly away.

"Penny for 'em," Mr. Pinkin said half an hour later, when Tillie was gazing into the fire.

"I was jus' thinkin'," Tillie said, "as 'ow Mr. Brown's the nices' curit you'd ever see. It'll be a real treat to 'ave 'im marry me an' Sid."

Dangerous Waters

"A rumour that the Duke of Windsor is to meet President Roosevelt, who is at present on board the U.S. light cruiser Tuscaloosa, in Bohemian waters, can neither be confirmed nor denied in Miami."—*Torquay Paper*.



"Mr. Hockshaw, of course, is our local Emma Pip."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Hitler's Kulturkampf

It is obvious enough (now) that when the Holy See, despite serious misgivings, signed the Concordat with the Third Reich in 1933 it shattered the chances of effective Catholic resistance to a deliberate policy of extermination. In 1934 the POPE perceived Germany's need of "the faith of martyrs." In 1935 he deplored persecution. In 1936 he aligned National Socialism and Bolshevism. In 1938 he mourned human dignity betrayed as by JUDAS ISCARIOT. To show what calculated infamy was, and is, at work to supplant Christianity by "the Religion of Blood," an authoritative but necessarily anonymous German author has assembled the main documents of *The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich* (BURNS, OATES, 5/-). His practically unannotated evidence of stupid, cruel, dirty and insidious oppression should be weighed by every student of totalitarian strategy. As regards opposition, most effective in the Bishops, the family might perhaps have put up a better show had not herd education—even religious herd education—tended to sap a natural stronghold. The lightest pages of this grim book are those describing the rites of Neo-Paganism. The District-Leader officiates at weddings, for instance, in uniform or subfusc—"on no account a sports suit."

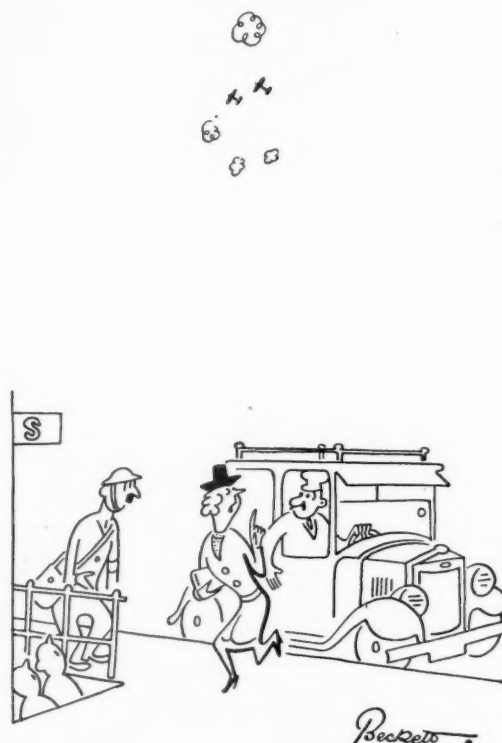
Notes on an English Outpost

Larkfield—which is somewhere in East Anglia—is one of the last of the villages. Its cottages have two resident thatchers at their service; its water comes from pump and stream; its squire does his duty by the land; the Hall is lit by lamps; there is still bread baked in a brick oven from flour ground in a water-mill. And if urban senselessness and greed would only foster instead of destroying, just enough links with the happier past remain to make this oasis of nine hundred souls, isolated on the edge of a rich corn-belt, the nucleus of a still happier and still more

English England. For that *England is a Village* (EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, 7/6) is the burden of Mr. C. HENRY WARREN's meditative jottings on the condition of snow-bound Larkfield during the first few weeks of 1940. Our virtues, he maintains, are village virtues—above all that "character" so sorely threatened by the menace of centralized education. And here he describes not merely home-bred crafts but home-bred culture, with portraits (inset) of their fast-disappearing exponents. Mr. DENYS WATKINS-PITCHFORD's sensitive woodcuts illuminate both the spirit and letter of the text.

Below the Surface

Most of the people in Mr. MARTIN SHANE GORE's novel, *This Peaceful Place* (BODLEY HEAD, 8/6), seem at first glance to be very ordinary, though *Venezia*, ward of City Councillor *Streat*, has a delicate air. The author takes us into their confidences and gives away secrets enough for a year's tea-party gossip even in the cathedral city which holds them. Who would guess that *Streat* was in love with his ward, or that she, who seemed to him so fastidious and flower-like, was capable of entertaining a lover in her bedroom? Who, in fact, would guess anything disturbing about anyone in that quiet place? Mr. GORE writes well enough, though his conversations are a bit tricky to follow; and he can see and understand dull tragedy. Yet, in spite of their secrets, his people remain dull because they are mostly so unlikeable. The children especially, though cleverly-drawn, are odious. May he give us some better companions next time.



"Wait!"



Newly-made Lance-Corporal. "ON THE COMMAND 'FIX' YOU DON'T FIX. BUT WHEN I SEZ 'BAYNIT' YOU GRAB UN BY THE 'AND, WHIPS UN OUT, AN' WOPS UN ON—AN' THERE YOU LETS UN BIDE AWHILE."

L. Raven Hill, January 6th, 1915

Return to Hampshire

"Why can't Simon leave us alone? Ever since I've known him he's been trying to make me over to his own pattern and only succeeded in pushing me out of shape"—so said the wife in Miss BEATRICE KEAN SEYMOUR's latest novel, *Fool of Time* (HEINEMANN, 9/-), and Simon's children felt the same. Dallas wanted to design dresses, Dora to grow up, Drew (the scene is the summer of 1937) to fight in Spain, and the little boy Stephen to keep all the cat's kittens. This was the family Simon's sister-in-law met when she returned from America to visit Hampshire again and to have another look at this born thwarter before deciding whether to marry for a second time. The attraction of Simon for his wife's sister seems the weak spot in the novel: one feels that the author dragged it in to add strength where none was needed. All the same, she has produced an easy and readable book, as usual, and the Hampshire scene is delightfully drawn.

"There's the Rub . . ."

The "rub" about *Alf's New Button* (HERBERT JENKINS, 7/6) was that it wasn't a "rubbable" one—that is to say the paraphernalia of the button-stick had nothing to do with its powers, because the wearer or handler of the moment had only to wish and the wish was granted. What is more, the button would not work across salt water, and it was cursed enough only to work at all once a week. This made things awkward when good little Alf's daughter, Annie, borrowed the jade button to wear as a pendant on her green frock and then wished to have the looks and clothes of one of the more lurid film-stars. It was awkward because one set of ravishing garments (with Annie inside) was soon abducted by the Khan of Wadistan. Those who want to know more (and who won't?) will read Mr. W. A. DARLINGTON's this war's sequel to last war's *Alf's Button*, and laugh again and indulge in an orgy of the very best sort of wishful-thinking.

Our New Year Resolutions

(By Smith Minor)

WE are now in the year 1941, which one hopes will be better than 1940, though weather it will or won't is, as they say, a moot point. Anyhow one does what one can, so on the last day of the old year, feeling in that rather solemn mood that always comes at the end of things, I went to Green, he's another boy, and I said,

"Have you thort of your New Year Resolushion yet?"

"No," he said, "have you?"

"No," I said.

So we thort, and cuoldn't think of any.

After a long wile Green said,

"What about trying with pensil and paper, it might help."

"That's a good idea," I said, "I wish I'd thort of it."

"What does it matter," he said, "so long as one of us thort of it?"

I saw what he meant.

Well, we got the pensils and the paper, and he was right, becorse as soon as we sat down to it Resolushions flowed like water out of a bursting tap. In fact they came so fast that before you could say Cock Robbin or Jack Robinson, whitchever you like, we'd each written six. Then we stoped, thinking that enough.

Well, when we read them out we found that some were pewtred but others were good, and it was going to be difficult to know which one to keep, becorse of corse we cuoldn't keep them all. Then Green got another idea, and said,

"Let's number them, and drawer from a pack of cards."

"Good egg," I said, "only we've only twelve, supose we drawer a king?"

"We'll think of one more to make up thirteen," he said.

You can't get away from it, he was in top form.

So we thort of one more, at least he did, and these were the thirteen Resolushions we drew for, namely, i.e.:

1. To do your teeth every mornig, whatever else you miss.
2. To find some Lonely Person and write to him or her.
3. To eat quietly. (This was one of Green's, I do but he doesn't. End of note in bracquets.)
4. To always tell the truth, but alowing one fib a day, the fib to be caried forward if not used.
5. To be desent to the Maths.

Master, weather he is desent to you or not, he genrally being not.

6. To always give up your seat to a lady, no matter what they look like.

7. To send a good idea for winning the war to Mr. Churchill every day untill he takes one.

8. To call on sad poeple and cheer them.

9. To, if it snows, help poeple to sweep their doorsteps for nothing.

10. To proteckt small boys from being bulied by bigger boys if the bigger boys aren't too much bigger.

11. To emprove one's speling.

12. To help blind poeple acros roads, or if there aren't any blind poeple, then old ladies.

13. To keep a hen.

Well, I hope you think that a pretty good list, we did, and the next thing to do was to get a pack of cards, whitche

we did, another boy having one and we thinking it all right to take it without asking, not being sure we wuold get it if we did, and he, this other boy, taking anything he can get hold of without asking, and for all we knew might have taken the pack of cards.

We felt a bit ankshious when we drew the cards, hoping we wuoldn't drawer 8 (see above), and I drew first, and I drew 8.

"Goly," I said.

"Bad luck," he said, "meaning of corse on the poeple you've got to cheer."

"Wuold you like to cheer them," I said, "I think you'd do it better."

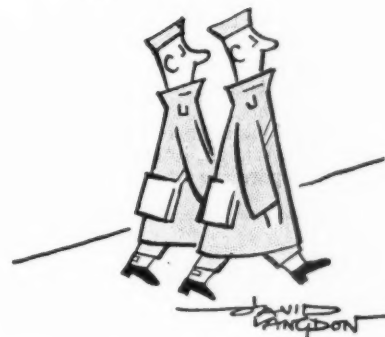
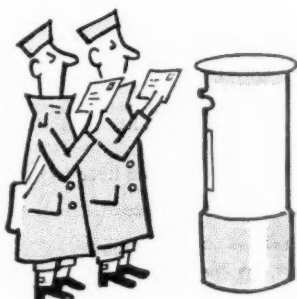
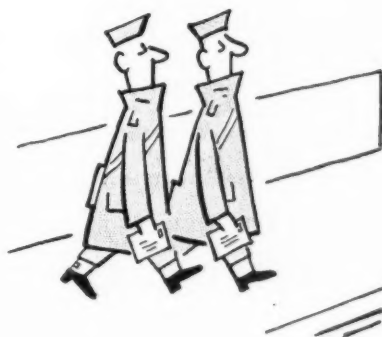
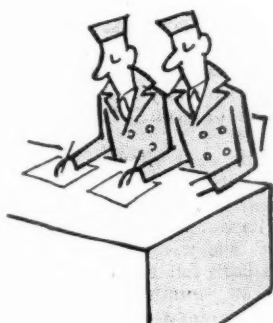
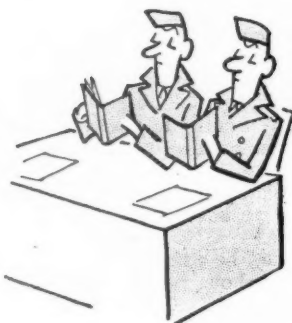
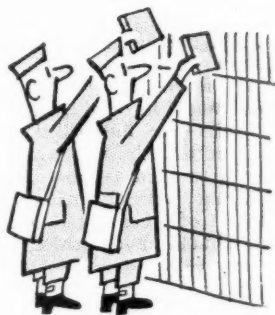
I was quite onest, becorse Green has a funny face to start with, and somebody once said mine was rather morneful.

"No fear," he said. "We've got to do what is drawn."

"Well, we will, if you do what I



"Excuse me, are you using this chair?"



drawer and I do what you drawer, they'll both be done," I said, "so if I give you say threepence, or no, I'll make it fourpence, will you swop, ekcepting if you drawer 10."

(See 10.)

He thort and said, "I'll only swop if you'll enclude 10, not otherwise."

I thort and said,

"All right, then."

He drew, and he drew 8.

"Goly," he said.

One had to admit it was a bit curious. Did he get the fourpence? He thort he shuoldn't, but I thort he shuold, so we made it tuppence.

Well, that was that, *comment dit* (French for "As they say"), and now came the grim buisiness of thinking out sad poeple and desiding whitich shuold chear whitich. We found rather to our surprize that there were quite a lot, such as:

(1) The wife of the Maths. Master, poor lady, it must be awfull.

(2) A raggid man who sells matches and smiles the momint he spots you coming, but you can tell at once he's trying hard not to let you see his greaf.

(3) A postman who always looks as if his father had made him be one when he had wanted to be something else, say an engin-driver.

(4) A new boy who sufers from the unforchunate name of Peawinkle, honestly.

(5) An old woman who we see sometimes going by "none too steddily," *comment dit*, mutering to herself things like, well, never mind.

(6) A Mrs. Eden who sells sweets, not related to Mr. A. Eden, as far as one knows. We don't know why she is sad, but she is.

We desided that the easiest wuold be No. 2 and No. 6, and when we tossed Green got the raggid man and I got Mrs. Eden. As I prefered the raggid man, we changed again for another tuppence.

Well, on the next day, whitich was New Years Day when such things have to start, I went out to look for the raggid man the first momint I got, and I found him shivvering at a corner. I thort he saw me at once, but he cuoldn't of, becorse he went on shivvering for a bit, and I even heard him mutering, thinking no one was there to hear him, "Whugh, it's cold, it was a mistake to porn my vest," but then he

did see me, and his face went all smiles, like I've told you, as if he hadn't got a trubble in the world. Only, of corse, I knew he had, and so I started to chear him.

"Good morning," I said.

"Good mornin, young gent," he said.

"Are you cold?" I said.

"Well it's not summer," he said.

"That's true," I said, it being true, "but think how much colder you'd be if we were at the North Pole."

"What?" he said.

"Think how much colder you'd be at the North Pole," I said, "or even Lapland."*

"Yes, I heard you," he said.

"Then why did you say what?" I said.

"What?" he said.

So far, I cuold see, I hadn't cheared him, so I tried something else.

"I see your selling matches," I said.

"Am I?" he said.

"Well, you ought to know," I said.

"Sometimes it doesn't look like it," he said.

"I see what you mean," I said, "but how many boxes did you sell yesterday?"

"Not one," he said.

"Well, anyhow, you can't do worse to-day, can you?" I said.

"What?" he said.

"There's nothing lower than nort," I said.

It was funny, here was I trying to chear him, but only making him look worse and worse. In fact he looked so bad I began to feal rather alarmed.

"You wuoldn't be playing a game with me, young gent, wuold you?" he said.

"I'm afraid not," I said, "I haven't time."

"Have you time to buy a box of matches?" he said, looking worse still.

"I wuold, with great pleashure," I said, "but I haven't any money." The reader will know how my fourpence had gone. "But look here," I said, "wuold you like a hapeny stamp?"

"What can I do with a hapeny stamp?" he said.

Something seamed to be going wrong with his voice.

"Well, not as many things as before the war," I said, "but I beleive there's still something. Or you cuold sell it."

*Lapland is not quite so high up, though high.—Author.

He said something I cuoldn't quite make out, so I desided to give him the stamp and go, but when I tried to find it, it wasn't there, and I remembered that I'd swopped it for two asid-drops.

"Look here, I'll bring it when I see you again," I said.

"I never want to see you again," he said.

"All right," I said.

And went.

When I got back, fealing rather curious, I found that Green had also got back, and I asked him how he had got on with Mrs. Eden, and he said, "I didn't."

"What, didn't go," I said.

"No, didn't get on," he said.

"Oh, I see," I said, not being able to help fealing rather pleased in a kind of a way. "What hapened?"

"Well, I went into the shop," he said, "and as she didn't come I went out and went in again, this time slambing the door, but still she didn't come, I supposed she was washing or something, so then I started coufing and making noises, encluding my immitashun of an angry rabbit—"

"That shuold have cheared her," I said.

"It made her come, but it didn't chear her," he said, "in fact, I thort she was going to burst into tears, so I said quickly, 'A happy New Year, Mrs. Eden,' and she said, 'Is that all you've come in to say?' and somehow, from her expreshun I thort it had better be, so I said, 'Yes,' and left her."

"Do you mean that was all?" I said.

"There wasn't any more," he said, "so it must of been. How did you get on?"

I told him, and after one of those rather gloomy silenses we talked things over and desided that life wuoldn't be worth living if we had to go through the whole year like that. So, as we both felt sad ourselves, we made up our minds to chear each other, and he stood on his head, and then I did him one of my string tricks.

They're not very good, but Green likes them.

o o

"Posthumous fame, of course comes to the real adventurer sooner or later, very often later, sometimes after he is dead."—From a novel.

We'd prefer to be here to enjoy it.

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